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SOVIETS SAY SPY CHARGES ARE "Dirty Provocation"

American charges that a former U.S. Army intelligence officer sold secret information to the Soviet government were "a dirty provocation," a Soviet official said Friday.

"The information from Washington is a pure provocation, a dirty provocation and the aim of it is quite clear: To worsen the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union," said Pavel N. Kotsuyba, a counselor at the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo.

The FBI arrested Richard Craig Smith, 40, of Bellevue, Wash., on Wednesday on charges of selling details of a double agent operation to the Soviets.

The FBI said Smith was paid \$11,000 by Victor I. Okunev, a first secretary at the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo since October 1980. In its allegation, the FBI said Smith met twice with Okunev in Tokyo, at the Soviet Commercial Representative's compound in November 1982 and again in February 1983.

"In that provocation they tried to put dirt on our trade representative," Kotsuyba said in a telephone interview. And he said the American charges amounted to an admission of U.S. espionage in Japan.

"While planning this provocation the American CIA exposed their own spy activities on Japanese territory, saying the arrested man worked for seven years for an organization in Japan that carried out spy activities," he said.

Kotsuyba denied that Okunev ever met Smith, saying "he had nothing to do with him."

Asked if Okunev planned to stay in Japan, Kotsuyba said, "Of course, why not? It is a strange question."

The Japanese Foreign Ministry official said no decision had been reached in the case.

An unidentified senior ministry official told Japanese media Thursday night that Okunev would be expelled if it were determined he was engaging in activities inconsistent with his diplomatic status.

Japan has no anti-espionage law and was described as a "paradise for spies" by Stanislav Levchenko, a former major in the KGB, the Soviet intelligence agency, who was stationed in Japan and defected to the United States in 1979.